

***Stretim*: Attitudes and Communication about Violence Against Women and Girls in Solomon Islands**

RESEARCH REPORT

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Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs 2018

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
CONTEXT	5
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	8
RESEARCH FINDINGS	14
✚ Malaita Focus Group Data	14
✚ Guadalcanal Focus Group Data	23
✚ Temotu Focus Group Data	31
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS	42

Purpose and Scope of Research

This report *Stretim: Attitudes and Communication about Violence Against Women and Girls in Solomon Islands* examines social attitudes to uncover what messages would be most likely to change violence against women and girls (VAW). Violence against women and girls reflects the broader issue of gender inequality in Solomon Islands and dramatically reflected in low levels of women's leadership in electoral politics.¹

This research uses methodologies and perspectives from psychology and sociology to look at attitudes of target audiences (survivors, perpetrators, families and communities) around a specific issue (violence). The central research questions are:

- 1) What attitudes supports intervention prior to, during and after violence?
- 2) Who is most likely to act to stop violence prior to, during and after violence?
- 3) What messages support stopping violence prior to, during and after violence?
- 4) What are recommendations to increase effectiveness of information, education and communications (or IEC) materials about violence?

Social marketing, as an approach in development and welfare sectors, takes insights from psychology to examine how information or advertising can impact attitudes and behaviour. Typically, social marketing research has been used to inform communications, information and education campaigns about health (including sexual health, suicide prevention and others), crime (including prevention and public reporting) and environmental responsibility (such as household waste management and use of resources).

Successful social marketing campaigns have tended to be those that are accompanied by legislative and regulatory change to support the behaviour change. An example is the success in many countries of reducing cigarette smoking through social marketing campaigns emphasising the benefits of quitting and the risks of smoking, plus legislating "no-smoking" areas, increasing tax on cigarettes and controlling cigarette advertising.

In developing countries, the benefits of social marketing on violence against women and girls are constrained by the broader environment of lower levels of access to services for men and women and inconsistent law enforcement. It is important to consider a "do no harm" approach to social marketing campaigns: to be realistic about what information and communications can do. For example, if communications materials encourage people to use a women's refuge that is already full with no space for new arrivals, or for women to resist stereotypical gender roles in a society where these roles are usually reinforced through physical violence, the communication materials can place women at further risk. Information and communications on the issue of violence is most effective when supported by a joint approach by law enforcement agencies, government, NGOs and civil society.

Research to understand local attitudes is critical to the success or failure of government and NGO interventions to stop violence. If women agree with violence-supportive attitudes about violence they are more likely to blame themselves, not seek help, endure the violence and experience its long term psychological and physical effects.² Men and women with more

violence-condoning attitudes will respond to violent incidents with less sympathy for the woman being hurt, and are more likely to blame her and not report incidents to police. Social attitudes also influence the response of service providers and government to violence against women and girls, with attitudes (such as that certain women deserve violence) inhibiting service staff responses to female victims.³

Understanding and targeting a range of audiences is needed – not just women but also men, youth and particular groups known to be at risk of violence (for example, females with a disability are often more at risk of violence). Campaigns to reduce violence against women and girls need to synergistically target men and women and reinforce each other to change behaviour norms and gender relations.⁴

Social marketing research around violence against women and girls is almost non-existent in the Pacific region, despite its application in several other contexts around the world. This research is, then in a sense, a pilot of a social marketing approach in a Pacific context.

This research is also intended to have a practical use – to increase the effectiveness of messages and communications materials, activities and events that the various government, church, women’s organisations, INGOs and refuge services conduct and to stimulate new actions that can lead to social change. A review of the previous violence against women policy (2010-2015) found that “greater coordination is required for key messaging” particularly for awareness raising about VAWG and the Family Protection Act, so this research is intended to inform such joint efforts.⁵

This report was prepared for, and endorsed by, the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs in October 2017-March 2018. Research methodology and analysis was conducted by Dr Anouk Ride, an independent, Solomon-based researcher with the support of local researcher Melinda Kii. Women’s Division Officers in Provincial Governments Clera Rikimani (Malaita) Joy Ellen Alfred and Ivory Solomate (Guadalcanal) and Doreen Takona (Temotu) were responsible for identifying suitable sites for community visits and providing background on the culture, groups influential in shaping attitudes and services in each province.



Above: Malaita Research Team (left to right) Facilitator Melinda Kii, Women’s Desk Officer Clera Rikimani, Dr Anouk Ride.

Below: Temotu Research Team (left to right) Facilitator Melinda Kii, Dr Anouk Ride, Women’s Desk Officer Doreen Takona.



The assignment was funded by Oxfam Australia as part of the Safe Families Fund, an initiative funded by the Australian Aid Program aimed at eliminating violence against women in the Solomon Islands.

Special thanks are also provided to all the agencies that supplied information for this report including Christian Care Centre, Family Support Centre, Malaita, Guadalcanal and Temotu Councils of Women, Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, Public Solicitors Office, Correctional Services Solomon Islands, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision. The report team also thanks all the anonymous communities and individuals who offered their time and views as part of the data collection.

CONTEXT

The Solomon Islands Government has recognised and responded to gender and high rates of violence against women and girls with significant recent policy and legal reform.

The National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development (GEWD) 2016 – 2020 was endorsed in 2017, and its subsidiary the National Policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women & Girls (EVAWG Policy) also endorsed in 2017, sets out the blueprint to eliminating violence against women and girls. In terms of justice, the Solomon Islands Government passed the Family Protection Act in 2014, entering force in April 2016.

Violence against women and girls has also renewed attention in the health and education sectors (through encouraging reporting of violence and in revising the school curriculum respectively). In some areas, community by-laws involving chiefs and church leaders are attempting to reduce crime and various kinds of violence with support from police, NGOs and councils of chiefs. Crime Prevention Committees established under RSIPF's Crime Prevention Strategy are working to try and prevent conflicts at the local level through by-laws, diversionary and prevention activities and better coordination between community leaders. Several provinces have refuge services and coordinated provincial-level alliances (involving chiefly and church structures, government, women's organizations and services and RSIPF) to respond to incidents of violence against women and girls.

Various NGOs (Save the Children's Youth & Alcohol Project, World Vision's Channels of Hope Project and Oxfam's Safe Families Project) also have projects around violence and seek to foster more prevention of violence in selected project sites and more broadly through supporting partner institutions. Many of these have a communications component aimed at changing social norms and attitudes (See Appendix A).

This array of responses attempts to deal with a widespread social problem. The *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Survey*, reports 64% of Solomon Islands women aged 15-29 years surveyed reported experiencing physical and/or sexual abuse from an intimate partner in their lifetime. The survey indicated this violence is largely unrelated to most socio-economic and demographic indicators, such as age, education, employment, income and marital status of women. However, characteristics of male partners such as unemployment, alcohol consumption, previous experience of physical violence and infidelity were associated with violence against women. There are strong correlations between experience of violence breeding further violence. Men who are violent to others are more likely to be violent towards their wives, as are those who saw women and children being hit or were hit themselves when they were growing up, corresponding with international studies.⁶ Violence reported in the survey was higher in capital city Honiara and focus groups pointed to specific pressures that have become more severe and widespread: financial stressors on households, alcohol consumption, plus changing gender norms, creating arguments between couples.⁷

Across the world, men are motivated to use violence against women by emotions (expressive reasons) and the desire to control (instrumental reasons).⁸ Often societies in flux such as post-conflict, and experiencing rapid economic change, both of which are situations in Solomon Islands, heighten male insecurities and expressive and instrumental use of violence against women and girls to reinforce traditional gender roles.

Few people involved in violent relationships seek assistance outside of the family and relatively little is recorded in research about why this is the case. Local intervention by church and chiefs is generally nominated by women as being a potential support for solving violent disputes, however, women's satisfaction with this is not known. In the nationwide survey, women said they did not seek help because violence was "normal" or "not serious". Most said church leaders, then health clinics, were sources of help.⁹

Only 5% of women report incidents of violence against them to the police.¹⁰ Consultations also indicate women who do report incidents to the police may be dissatisfied with responses, response time and effectiveness, although more research is required to develop a picture of women's experience of violence and the justice system.¹¹

Reports from agencies directly providing services to female survivors of violence (Social Welfare Division, Family Support Centre, Christian Care Centre) indicate most people hear about the service through word of mouth (See *BOX 1* for an example).

BOX 1: What encourages people to use services?

Experience from Family Support Centre

Family Support Centre (FSC) provided 236 clients support between 1 December 2016 and 1 December 2017. This number under-represents the number of people helped by FSC as the client is listed as the individual victim of violence (e.g. the child) but service provision includes others (e.g. the parents of the child). As such, the actual number of people benefitting from Family Support Centre services might be said to be between 1000-2000 people a year.

The clear majority of people coming to Family Support Centre for help were female – 91% of all clients during the period. There were no men coming to the Centre as victims of violence during this period.¹²

Family Support Centre categorises its presenting complaints into 11 types as follows:

Child abduction/reunification	Child neglect/abandonment
Divorce/Separation	Economic/property abuse
Family conflict	Maintenance/custody
Mental health conditions (e.g. depression, anxiety)	
Physical Abuse (IPV/Child)	Sexual Abuse/Assault
Witnessing abuse/violence	Other family issues

Of the 236 people presenting complaints during the period, 22% (51 people) came to the Centre because of physical abuse, sexual abuse or assault or witnessing abuse/violence. This figure underestimates the actual number of clients who may have experienced physical or sexual violence, as FSC staff report anecdotally that many women initially come to the centre for one type of service (e.g. maintenance/custody) but later reveal they have been abused or assaulted.

Information, Education + Communication about violence

The data reveals that people coming to the Family Support Centre because of physical abuse, sexual abuse or assault or witnessing abuse/violence have often heard about FSC through family and friends (45%). Word of mouth is currently the most common way survivors of violence hear about services and come use the Centre for support. Anecdotally, FSC staff report that there can be a “snowball effect” where women who have had support from the Centre tell other people in their family or local community and then these people also start to use the service.

Other common referrals for FSC were Police (18%) and Seif Ples (a referral service providing 18% of clients who had experienced violence). Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials or programs, such as awareness talks, encouraged 14% of people who went to the Centre to seek support from FSC.

This suggests that increasing awareness and use of Family Support Centre can be accomplished by building on the success of “word of mouth” in spreading information (such as spreading information through social networks, e.g. church networks, women’s groups, schools etc.). Also important is increasing the reach of IEC materials and activities, in collaboration with other organisations, so the percentage of clients who come to the service after receiving IEC can increase over time, as more efforts are directed in this area to implement the Family Protection Act.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes that support violence against women and girls (VAWG¹³) and messages that could change these attitudes. Specific communications approaches in the *National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women* which require an evidence base include prevention, increasing awareness of the Family Protection Act and changing behaviour of perpetrators. Specific actions in the Plan of Action 2016-2020 are summarised in *BOX 2* (right). This plan already identifies certain target audiences (women experiencing violence, perpetrators of violence, and communities in general) and has identified the need for consistent, standardised messaging around the Family Protection Act, survivor services and prevention.

This research project uses focus groups to discuss and agree on attitudes and norms. Focus groups were gender-segregated to ensure women and girls have a safe space to discuss violence. Discussion was based around three pictures of a couple - one arguing, one with the man hitting the woman, and one after the physical violence had finished with the couple thinking about the situation after it occurred (See pictures below).

BOX 2: EVAW Policy Plan Communications-Related Actions.

The Solomon Islands Government *EVAW Policy Plan 2016-2020* lists specific actions to be taken in this time including:

Outcome 1: Holistic prevention strategies

- ✚ Media training on domestic and family violence
- ✚ Coordinate stakeholders to develop key messages
- ✚ Stakeholder communications committee
- ✚ Develop IEC messaging aimed at men
- ✚ Publicise 132 hotline as first point of contact

Outcome 2: Justice

- ✚ Targeted awareness raising at community level
- ✚ Standardised national awareness & IEC (in pijin) on Family Protection Act

Outcome 3: Survivor services

- ✚ Agreed consistent messaging &



Examples of pictures used for group discussions (from left to right): Couple arguing, Man hurting his wife, Couple after violence thinking about what happened

So, using these pictures, participants in the research were asked to identify messages that could change perpetrator and survivor of violence behaviour in these three stages: when arguments come up, when violence is occurring, and after incidents of violence. These

messages were formulated based on what people might say in these situations to quell violence, and after this discussion, participants were asked how information and education communications from government, services and other relevant organisations could communicate in a way that will most likely foster reductions in violence.

Participants were asked to imagine messages suitable for the perpetrator of violence (male), the survivor of violence (female) and the broader family of which the couple is a part. This is in recognition of the reported experience of the justice sector and refuges that it is very difficult for women to take actions which might increase their safety (e.g. temporary respite away from the perpetrator, asking the perpetrator to change behaviours, leaving the violent relationship, or taking the issue to Police and the courts) without support of family members. For the perpetrator, pressure from close and extended family is likely to be more influential on behaviour than outsiders, especially in areas not reached by services or where local governance is weak. Surveys tend to indicate that VAW is first dealt with in the family, with local influencers such as church leaders and chiefs becoming involved for more severe cases and police and courts very rarely accessed.

Therefore, if messages can change attitudes and behaviour within the family, this can potentially support prevention (expected norms of how members should behave, and early intervention by family members to try and quell violence before it escalates in severity), protection (providing safe places for women to talk about their experience of violence, seek refuge from other family members or access services) and prosecution (increase familial support to women to prosecute cases).

Five types of focus groups of participants were consulted in each province for this report:

- a) *Female Survivors' Focus Groups*: females who have experienced violence and accessed services.
- b) *Male Prison Inmates' Focus Group*: males who have perpetrated violence and been prosecuted for family violence crimes or violent crimes and who are currently serving prison sentences.
- c) *Community Men's Focus Group*: male community representatives including chiefs, church leaders, farmers, fishermen or workers, as representing major groups in the local community.
- d) *Community Women's Focus Group*: women leaders (particularly from church and schools) housewives and workers.
- e) *Community Youth Focus Group*: students and unemployed youth aged 15-30.

A total of 15 focus groups were conducted, five each in Guadalcanal, Malaita and Temotu provinces. The names and identifying factors of individuals and communities are kept confidential to encourage people to speak openly. A form was used to record consent and to ask survey questions on preferences people had about communications and actual use of communications materials or tools in the previous month.

Participation was voluntary and people were keen to participate in discussions. It was explained that the purpose of discussions was not to take details about the level of violence in a community or individual cases of violence but about attitudes and "toktok" (talk/discussion/dialogue) about the issue. All participants were referred to the 132 Hotline

as an option for counselling and other services if needed and provided with basic information on the Family Protection Act at the end of the workshop.

This research uses a partially participatory analysis with local researchers as facilitators and participants involved in parts of the analysis (particularly what messages will be effective and preferred formats of communication on the local and individual level). Participants analyse attitudes that support or not support violence against women and girls and how communication can reduce violence in their situation or community.

The researcher then collated 324 positive messages and grouped them into similar wordings and primary nominations (suggestions people made first without prompting from the facilitator). This identified the messages most likely to be accepted in the local context, and those which had been perceived or experienced to reduce violence.

Survey and workshop data also were used to provide recommendations about format, content, key messages and distribution channels suitable for effective communications about the issue of violence against women and girls.

The testing of MWYCFA draft communication materials and responses was provided in an internal report to MWYCFA. The same materials were also tested by VAWG services in a session of the SPC workshop entitled "Developing Public Education IEC Materials on Family Protection Act Stakeholder Consultation" from 21-22 November 2017 at Heritage Park Hotel, Honiara which also provided valuable background to this report.

Forty-one people from different service providers and organisations working on violence against women and girls were consulted for information about communication materials and advice. Many offered samples of IEC materials used currently and feedback from their own organisations on effectiveness of current materials. The information from service providers and NGOs was particularly helpful to cross-check research findings about gender norms and use of services by women.

The community sites visited as part of this research had no previous awareness or project around the issue, and it is noted that this is the case for the vast majority of Solomon Islands. Projects around violence were confirmed to be largely confined to urban areas and communities around provincial towns (Auki, Lata and Honiara) in each of the provinces visited.

Data Collection

A total of 15 workshops were conducted in November 2017-January 2018 with over 30 hours of discussions in gender and age segregated groups of participants.

Exactly 200 people participated in the workshops in Guadalcanal (71), Malaita (82) and Temotu Provinces (47). These included a range of genders, ages and identities as seen in *Figure 1* and *Figure 2*. Identities (ethnic or culturally based) were categorised by asking participants which province they were from and what was their mother tongue language. Several people identified with more than one identity.

Figure 1: Age and gender of participants by provincial location (n = 200)

	Malaita (n=82)	Guadalcanal (n=71)	Temotu (n=47)
Gender	47% Female, 53% Male	43% Female, 57% Male	45% Female, 55% Male
Age			
60+	8%	3%	2%
41-60	13%	18%	32%
31-40	23%	15%	34%
25-30	21%	27%	9%
15-24	35%	37%	23%

Eighty-two participants in Malaita nominated mostly Malaitan ethnic ties (64 Kwa'arae, 5 Toa'abaita, 4 Kwaio, 2 Fataleka, and one each Walande, Langalanga, Lau, Baegu and Malaita [unidentified]). Most participants, 78%, were from the local region Kwa'arae. A minority of people had ethnic ties to more than one Malaitan region (mostly prison inmates) or were from another province (mostly women that had moved to be with their husband's family). One person in Malaita reported a disability (physical).

Seventy-one participants in Guadalcanal nominated 19 different identities (inclusive of 7 different Malaitan regions and 4 different Guale regions, 2 Central Province regions and others). The diversity is due to the large number of prison inmates and female survivors of violence from other provinces now resident in Guadalcanal. The participants included people from five (Choiseul, Western Province, Malaita, Makira, Temotu and Central) of the nine provinces. In the local community visited however, the people were mostly from Guadalcanal (only 8% of community participants were from other provinces). No participants reported a disability.

In Temotu, a total of 47 participants included six different local identities speaking local languages and one participant was from Malaita. Local identities represented included Polynesians and Reef Islanders. The researchers and NGO workers noted that Polynesians have significant differences in customs around chiefly leadership and family traditions than compared with the majority Melanesian population. The sample size in this study and location chosen does not provide data on these differences, however, consideration of this is important for provincial wide or specific area communications projects around leadership, gender and conflict resolution.

Figure 2: Ethnic ties nominated by, and gender of, participants by provincial location (n = 207)

Malaita (n=85)		
	Female	Male
Kwa'arae	35	29
Other Malaita	2	14
Temotu	1	1
Guadalcanal	1	0
Choiseul	1	0
Unidentified	0	1
Guadalcanal (n= 75)		
	Female	Male
Teha	21	22
Other Guadalcanal	1	6
Malaita	4	8
Central Province	0	4
Choiseul	1	1
Makira	2	0
Western Province	1	1
Kiribati	1	1
Temotu	0	1
Temotu (n =47)		
	Female	Male
Natugu	12	19
Tokana	4	6
Reef	2	1
Santa Cruz	0	1
Malaita	1	0

Two of the communities visited were predominantly Anglican and one South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC) however efforts were made to represent a range of denominations in each site. Religious denomination was not seen to affect attitudes, with religious leaders in all groups mentioning the role of the church in supporting marriage and happy family life. As such, denominational differences are not explored in this report, with church responses to situations of violence being detailed through the words and experience of participants.

Media use was captured in forms filled out prior to the workshops. It indicates a surprisingly low use of media by the research participants outside Guadalcanal, even though all locations were close to provincial capitals (see *Figure 3*). The question asked to gauge media use was what media you used last month to get information. More often than not, people had not used any media. Participants in some provinces (e.g. Temotu) had gender differences in use of media, with women's use of media being much lower.

Figure 3: Media use reported in the previous month, and gender of participants, by provincial location (n =201)

	Malaita (n=85)		Guadalcanal (n=73)		Temotu (n=43)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
None	18	22	6	10	10	8
Radio	8	10	16	17	4	7
Text Message	7	9	3	10	2	0
Film/TV	0	2	0	5	1	5
Book	0	1	4	1	0	0
Noticeboard/Poster	2	6	0	1	1	5

All the workshop groups had recent experience of severe violence against women and girls, with people in two out of three locations visited not seeking help outside of the community to deal with this problem. In the case of one community, participants that reported they did seek help outside the community (by calling the police) the police had not taken any action against the perpetrator. That same community had a recent case where a woman had died in her home after being beaten to death by her husband. That incident was never reported to police.

To ensure the safety of women who had experienced violence, only those currently accessing services or support were invited to the survivors' workshops, however some survivors also reported themselves and others being turned away by the police when calling or visiting for assistance. All workshops participants were provided with basic information about the Family Protection Act and the 132-referral service to encourage use of services in future.

Several sensitive issues were discussed in the workshop, including recent experiences of violence. Participants were encouraged to speak generally rather than specifically about incidents, however, particularly in the survivors' and male prison inmates' workshops participants often talked about their own situations as examples of broader problems, attitudes and common situations. Their personal experience was sometimes indicated indirectly, in how people referred to the pictures. For example, in one of the male prison inmates focus groups, many participants referred to the violent man as "bro", in female and youth groups, the woman was referred to as "auntie" or "gele" indicating people may have been thinking of their own experience or those of others close to them.

There was no marked social desirability bias (desire of respondents to avoid embarrassment and project a favourable image to others) in comments and people were frank in explaining attitudes that support violence against women and girls. In all groups, attitudes that condoned violence were raised openly, as discussed below.

Reflecting the cultural and situational diversity of Solomon Islands, there are important differences between provinces on attitudes towards violence against women and girls which could be used to frame more effective communications. The following analysis will detail these findings by provincial sample, then provide recommendations for provinces and nationally.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Malaita Focus Group Data

TARGET AUDIENCES – Who will speak to stop violence?

In discussion of developing situations of violence, incidents of violence and the aftermath, across all focus groups the most commonly nominated first person to intervene was fathers of the husband hurting his wife (see *Figure 4* below). Fathers were 1/3rd of all nominations and the primary nomination in 3/5 focus groups.

Figure 4 – Nominated First People to Speak (n=35)

	Male FG	Female FG	Youth FG	Female Survivors FG	Male Prison FG
1. During argument	Father	Father	Chief	Mother	Father
	Mother	Son	Father		Mother
	Brother				Chief
2. During violence	Neighbours	Father	Chief	Mother	Brother
	Brother	Mother	Brother		Mother
			Father		Sister
3. After violence Aftermath	Father	Church	Chief	Mother	Grandfather
	Mother	Wife	Father		Mother
	Church	Husband			Wife
					Father

In Malaita, married couples often live with the parents of the husband, with the father of the husband having greatest authority over the husband, and the broader family. Fathers also have paid “bride price”- an exchange from the husband’s family to the wife’s family in marriage ceremonies. This ceremony is symbolic and can involve significant payments of traditional or cash money and other goods from the husband’s family to the wife’s family. Therefore, fathers have a stake in the husband-wife relationship which is linked to family pride, status and tangible resources such as money, pigs and other valuables, as explained by the participants:

Taem tufala rawa osem, den dadi kam toko, taem hem harem osem, bae hem kulim daon toktok blo hem tu ia, osem bae hem tingim dat: samting me duim ia hem no stret ia.

Translation (T): When couples are fighting like this, the father comes and talks, the man will hear it and cool down his comments too, he will think: this thing that I am doing is not right.

Community Women’s Focus Group

Response (R) 1: Bae hem tingim dat dadi blo hem na peim gel ia fo hem, den gel ia mas rispektim tu tabu blo hem o funga blo hem ia so o mas peisent na kos hem na peim mi ia.

R 2: Bae waef blo hem hapi na kos funga blo hem sapotim hem, fo bae hasban blo hem no kilim hem.

T R1: He will think that his father paid the girl for him and she must respect her in laws or her father in-law, so she has to have patient, because her father in-law has paid for her bride price.

T R2: His wife will be happy because his father supports her, so the husband will not hit her.

Community Men's Focus Group

However, in the victims and perpetrators workshop, participants also talked about the role of women (26% of nominations) in these disputes. Some said mothers have power to stop fights, as explained by the prison inmates:

R12: Sumfela mami ot sa holdim fight tu, danger fo shutim fight tu, sumfela matron bae hem sei: iu no kilim woman, woman bae luk afterim iu.

R13: Sumfela woman lo Lau bae swear no good lo sunny boy nao – "iu go underneath leg blo mi".

R14: Bae fight stop nao.

R15: Givim compo nao.

T R12: Some mothers can suspend a fight as well, are powerful to shut down fights as well, some older women will say: do not hit her, she will look after you.

T R13: Some women from Lau will swear strongly at their sons, "you go underneath my legs" [taboo action/swear].

T R 14: That will stop the fight.

T R 15: Give compensation now [the man must pay compensation].

Male Prison Inmates' Focus Group

Women too generally nominated fathers as being the most likely and influential to speak in situations of violence, except for women who had used church support for violent situations. These women emphasised the mother's role as peacemaker, her ability to "talk soft" and soothe tempers and so influence the situation in a different way. The role of mothers-in-law of the wife were seen as very important in influencing the behaviour of women in violent situations:

Supos mami in law no help out tingting blo woman hem no tink gud like go out from marriage, break up, supos parents no help out fo make peace lo family.

T: If the mother in-law does not help, the woman will be thinking to leave the marriage, break up, if the parents do not help to make peace in the family.

Female Survivors' Focus Group

Almost all focus groups (4/5) nominated brothers as the people the most likely to physically restrain a husband hurting his wife, take him away from the woman and encourage men to “cool down”.

It is interesting to note that of all the focus groups, only the male prison inmates nominated chiefs and church leaders as being the first to speak as arguments were arising. Church leaders were more commonly nominated as being active after violent incidents by adult men and women.

Chiefs were raised as intervenors in cases which could not be solved by male family members:

Wans mifala famili problem osem oketa save go lo oketa chifs ia...u go toko lo man ia evri taem hem save osem noma ia fo hem lelebet kulim daon wei blo hem ia, bicos samtaems iven oketa family membas oketa tok lo man ia bat hem no save kat daon tu ia, cos samtaems taem oketa woman save go thru na oketa chifs fo talem fo tok lo man ia fo hem katem daon wei blo hem lelebet.

T: Once we have family problems, they know to go to the chiefs... you go talk to him every time he is like this in order for him to cool down his ways a bit because sometimes even the family members they talk to the man but he doesn't cut down [the violence] because sometimes, women go through the chiefs to tell the man to cut down his ways a bit.

Community Women's Focus Community Women's Focus Group

Chiefs and church leaders were seen as taking a problem-solving approach to the cause of arguments:

R1: Tingting blo mi osem, taem oketa [church] lida ia kam fo tok weitim tufala ia bae oketa askem wat na problem blo tufala ia, finis, oketa jes advaisim problem blo tufala en solvim problem blo tufala. Oketa kam ask hao na problem blo tufala start go go kasem distaem fo faendim wea na start blo problem ia den oketa lida ia bae jes advaisim tufala.

R2: Chif bae do da seim wea church lidas duim, bae kam kulim daon tufala den faendim rut blo problem den advaisim tufala and prea weitem tufala.

T R1: My opinion is, when leaders come and talk with the couple they will ask what is the problem and then just advise them on the problem and how to solve it. They come and ask how did this problem start and end up like this, to find the problem started, then the leaders will advise them.

T R2: Chief does the same the church leaders do, he will come and calm down the couple then find out the root problem and advise them and pray with them.

Community Women's Focus Group

There was some feeling in the Community Men's Focus Group, which included leaders of the community, that it would be desirable for organizations to support chiefs and church leaders

to have an active role in domestic violence cases and for law and local conflict resolution systems to reinforce each other:

R1: Hem gud fo pulis o ada NGO kam n storim na hao fo stap gud if oketa samting ia wos. Fo sapotim mifa lo saed lo toktok

R2: If saed lo loa hem waka wit kastom bae hem jes waka, if loa seleva hem had fo waka.

R3: Umi stap lo chenjing wold, onli ting bae katem daon vaelens hem chech en kalta. Chech en kalta mas go tugeda weiting loa.

R4: Titsim pikinini lo chech, kastom en loa bae evriting olraet noma, trifala man ia mas go tugeda. Distaem tising lo home noma na osem bifo distaem pikinini niglekt tumas nao.

T R 1: Its good for police and other NGOs to come and talk about how to stay peaceful if the situation is worse. To support us in our comments.

T R 2: If that side [law] works with custom it will work, if law on its own, it's not going to work.

T R 3: We are in a changing world, the only thing to cut down violence is church and culture. Church and culture must go together with law.

T R 4: Teach children religion, custom and law and everything will be OK, these three things must go together. This time teaching at home is not what it was, children are neglected.

Community Men's Focus Group

While, in general, the main actors in preventative, intervention and aftermath stages are the parents of the couple, chiefs and church leaders have a key role in intervention and settlement particularly in cases considered "serious". Conversely, male prison inmates were keen for police to only intervene in "serious" cases and leave the rest to chiefs to settle.

Prison inmates, themselves being from north, central and southern regions of Malaita emphasised differences in who would be the most effective in changing male behaviour:

Sumfela ota hearim dadi, sumfela hearim sister sumfela bro people different, sumfela mami olsem

T: Some [men] will listen to their father, some their sister, some their brother, people are different, some their mothers, it's like that.

Male Prison Inmates' Focus Group

Women as individuals had very little agency in violent situations, and were reliant on others to speak out against violence. One woman explained the female "burden" of violence in communities that did not act together to stop violence:

Bifo wans hem lelebet happen lo mi ia, taem olo hem osem osem olowe mi se Bae mi ripotim u ia den bae afta den bae mi lukim hem cheng tu. Wans eni wan lo chech se osem osem bae hard ia, wans iu se bae mi ripotim u lo polis, bae hem lelebet kat daon, bat rili fo mifa akt osem lo ful vilej blo mifa noma ia. Oketa mekem sam lo n oda bat fo mifa insaed lo oketa komunitis fo mifa aktim noma, hem noma. So, hem osem rili samtaems mifa oketa woman mifa bearem oketa peins en oketa hevi samting wea oketa olo blo mifa save duim osem.

T: Before once it happened to me a bit, when husband was like that all the time, I said would report him, then after I saw him change. Once anyone from church talks, it's hard, once you say you will report him to the police, he will cut down a bit, but really, for us to act like that, we need our whole village. They make some law and order but for us inside the community, for us to act upon it, no. So, it's like, really, sometimes, we women we bear the pain and every heavy thing where our, all our husbands, does.

Community Women's Focus Group

MESSAGES – what kind of messages will be used and understood?

Positive Messages – Anti-violence + family responsibilities

Focus groups in Malaita identified a total of 69 messages people said in situations of violence against women and girls that were seen as useful in preventing or stopping violence. These were grouped into similar themes to summarise content, with the following emerging as the most used messages among respondents.

- 1) *Solve the problem by talking not fighting.* 28% of messages put primary emphasis on the need to stop and talk the problem over, rather than physically fighting about it. Typical comments given as an example in the Men's Focus Group were: "Sei! Wat na utufala rawa lo hem? Ia utufala stopem fastaem rawa ia en stretim" (Hey! What are you fighting about? Stop fighting and sort it out). The problem-solving approach was typical of parents, church leaders and chiefs. Church leaders and church women put an emphasis on benefits of healthy relationships and of prayer as part of their discussions with couples.
- 2) *Violence is regretted later.* 19% of all messages emphasised the need to "kul daon" (cool down/calm down) and that what was said and done in anger would be regretted later "bae iu sorre behind" (you'll be sorry later) or had resulted in regret "naoi u jus sorre" (now you are just regretful). 4% of all messages warned that violence could lead to murder of the woman. Perpetrators of violence in the Male Prison Inmates' Focus Group were particularly keen that men be given information on how to "cool down" and avoid enacting violence – providing suggestions of time out or separation, physical labour or activities as a diversion from the situation, talking about the problem with friends or counselling.
- 3) *Violence brings shame on the family.* All focus groups mentioned shame, but the most comments about shame were in the Community Youth Focus Group. Shame came from bringing quarrels out into the open in the form of violence. This suggests a strong social norm being taught in rural communities that problems between

husband and wife should be solved within the family, which may contribute to couples hiding the violence, but in the focus groups was used as a reason to not engage or stop from violence (as physical violence can be seen/heard by others). Typical comments were that violence “luk rubbish” (looks bad) or “shame lo mi”, “shame lo iutufala” “shame lo iumi” (brings shame on me [father], shame on the couple, or shame on the family). For example, a comment in the Community Youth Focus Group said parents were likely to say:

“Disfela way iu duim hem make shame lo mi, makem hem public story hem shame lo mi next time no duim diswan lo woman”

T: What you are doing shames me, makes everything public, is a shame for me, next time do not do it to the woman.

13% of messages explicitly mentioned shame. In many examples, this shame was seen to have dire consequences, for example:

Bae people tallem iu no kilim gele blo iu, no good fight kum between different tribe, fight bae go on top wat nao iutufala startim

T: People will tell you not to kill your girl, or else a fight will come up between the different tribes, a fight on top of what you and the girl started.

Male Prison Inmates’ Focus Group

4) Husbands and their families have a duty to care for wives and children, not hurt them.

In the Solomon Islands context, marriage is not just a contract between individuals but viewed as cementing obligations between the two families. Part of this understanding is that the husband’s family will care for the wife, and that if this duty is breached it is acceptable for the wife to run away from her husband back to her own kin or for the wife’s family to demand compensation for the wrongdoing. This social norm is used to pressure men not to abuse their wives – as prevention (a warning of consequences) and intervention (to stop violence by emphasising consequences for the individual man and his family). Typical comments were that wives were not given to their in-law family for abuse:

No kilim woman ia. Hem pipol blo oketa ia u kilim dae bae u peim laef blo hem?! Oketa no givim kam fo u kilim ia

T: Do not hit her. She is their people. If you kill her will you pay [compensation] for her life?! They [the man’s in-laws] did not give her to you for you to hit her.

Community Women’s Focus Group

By framing the responsibility to care, not hurt, wives as a collective responsibility, it gives licence for family members such as mothers-in-law, brothers etc. to intervene in arguments between couples. Having been key in negotiating terms of marriage and officiating marriage ceremonies, fathers are the most responsible and likely to speak on this theme. 13% of messages emphasised responsibilities of the husband to the wife’s family.

Other messages included the threat of the Police arresting the perpetrator of violence (6%), the usefulness of wives in the household (cooking, gardening etc., also 6%) and messages to simply “stop” (13%).

Negative Messages – Victim Blaming

While many suggestions were made about talk that could prevent and stop violence, in every focus group there was also acceptance and promotion of social norms that in certain cases violence was legitimate, for example:

Samtaems taem gel ia swea lo man ia o toktok wea bae ofendim man ia. Woman ia bae hem save talem samting wea bae hertim na man ia. No mata mami tok, eksampol lo oketa samting ia na osem oketa swea.

T: Sometimes when a girl swears at a man or talks in a way that offends him. A Woman will tell something that hurts the man. No matter if the mother talks, example of something [that causes violence] all the swearing.

Community Women’s Focus Group

Women in the Community Women’s Focus Group said if women said sorry to their husband they could cool him down, and that it was good for the women to apologise to the man after violence. Women talking too much or swearing was seen to lead to violence. In the Community Men’s Focus Group, there was one participant who denied any violence (despite cases being reported to the researchers) and men said if a woman “breaks custom” or has a “bad attitude” then violence will likely happen. Another participant said if a woman who was being hit swore back, the violence would be more extreme and there was a belief that men intoxicated by alcohol could not control their violence. Youth pointed out that in cases where the woman had done something considered “wrong”, other women would also shout to encourage the violence. Female survivors reported being told by services to “tok peace” when men were drunk and given things to say and do that were said to reduce a man’s temper. Male prison inmates said it was common for men to blame women for the violence, rather than themselves.

In the short talk about the Family Protection Act and questions with the community provided by the researchers after the research questions, a common question was whether if a man had a “reason” for violence he would be treated more leniently under the law. In the Community Youth Focus Group, the youth asked what would happen if such a man killed his wife and it was explained this was a crime of murder. Women’s group representatives in Auki suggested a message of “do not take the law into your own hands” was needed to counter the common belief of communities that violence was justified against women and girls that had done something considered “wrong”.

Better communication and coordination with Chiefs, through bodies such as Councils of Chiefs would be valuable to spread the message of there being no excuse for violence under the law. Chiefs in the Community Male Focus Group and women leaders in Auki expressed a desire for engagement between chiefs and responsible agencies for the Family Protection Act implementation, so they can educate their communities on the law and violence against women and girls. Chiefs offered to distribute educational materials to their communities, and hold talks on the issue to complement the materials.

The blaming of women for violence, is a significant social norm that poses obstacles to preventing or reducing violence and to women seeking help from services or the law. Female survivors emphasised the need for services and IEC materials about services to appear welcoming and non-judgemental and had encountered victim-blaming attitudes while accessing services.

Awareness of services and the Family Protection Act is extremely low – only 2 out of the 84 research participants had heard of the Family Protection Act, one because they were a victim of violence using services and the other because he had just returned to Malaita from Honiara and reported hearing about it there. Only the participants in the Female Survivors' Focus Group (women currently accessing services for violence) were aware of the 132 telephone helpline for people experiencing violence.

Another obstacle raised in focus group discussions is lack of public confidence in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and so reduced willingness to use the system under the Family Protection Act. In the Community Women's Focus Group and in interviews with service providers in Auki, questions were raised about whether the Police would act as intended under the Family Protection Act – with personal experiences of alleged bias and inaction by Police being used as evidence to support such views. Further research and information on police response to incidents of violence, response to women in violent situations, would be useful to clarify these matters.

FORMAT & DISTRIBUTION – what is the best way to get information to people?

Visual information preferred

There was a strong preference in all focus groups for videos and posters, accompanied by face to face talks if possible. Literacy rates of women, in particular, were lower and so needed visually communicated messages. Visual communication was also nominated as useful for people with hearing difficulties.

Mobile phones (text messages), rather than radio, was preferred as communication channel. However, not much information is transmitted via mobile phone, so the most common used media channel for information is radio. It appears leaders in the community are more likely to own and use radio, so radio still has a valuable role in spreading key information to influential people in the community.

In general, media use among participants was low, as evidenced through the low numbers of people who had used media (including mobile phones) in the previous month (see *Figure 3*). This may relate to literacy levels as well as access (education was not recorded in data forms but observed to be low amongst women in rural areas which accords with census data).

Networking most valuable

This low level of media use suggests networks – such as church and chief networks and services such as schools and clinics – will be more effective as distribution points than traditional media. Chiefs, in particular, expressed a willingness to provide talks with IEC materials and arrange for distribution.

INFORMATIONAL NEEDS – what are specific requests for information?

Female survivors of violence who had accessed services said they wanted information that would reduce fears of going to a service, and explain how services could help. For example, a step by step description of what happens when people go to a service and report violence, explaining options to women and key decisions. (A good example of this is the Family Support Centre’s materials they use with women in services, however survivors said it would be useful if people who had not used a service understood the process, to reduce apprehension or misconceptions about the process).

Women in the Community Women’s Focus Group expressed the same need - they wanted information about services – where they were, how to access them, what was available and what kind of help was provided. Both female survivors and the Community Women’s Focus Group said the most important information they needed was about services (details about the Family Protection Act and law was seen as of secondary importance).

Men in focus groups nominated a need for information and programs about reducing alcohol consumption which was seen to exacerbate violence. They also were most interested in the penalties under the Family Protection Act and details of prosecutions. This information was seen to have a potentially useful role to deter men from violence.

Male prison inmates were particularly keen to share with others behaviour change information – how to manage anger, avoid violence and stop violent behaviour. There is potential for reformed inmates to formulate messages and materials and have a useful role in spreading this information to other males in their community upon release.

Youth wanted to see images of themselves (other youth) in materials to see the relevance to their situation. It was suggested that available materials seemed to target adults, using pictures of adults rather than youth. This suggests a need to be more inclusive of youth in the design of materials, or creating different materials for youth.

Guadalcanal Focus Group Data

TARGET AUDIENCES – Who will speak to stop violence?

In discussion of developing situations of violence, incidents of violence and the aftermath, across all focus groups the most commonly nominated first person to intervene was parents of the couple (33% of all nominations) with parents of wives and husbands equally nominated as likely to intervene (see *Figure 5* below). An interesting difference from Malaita and Temotu, was the greater number of nominations (12%) for mothers to intervene. Mothers were nominated by groups likely to be experiencing violence (females, female survivors and male prison inmates). It was confirmed in discussions that male and female parents more or less had similar rights to speak in arguments and violent situations, although the settlement of compensation and disputes is usually handled by males.

While not as common as parents, brothers and other male relatives also played important roles in intervening in situations, as representatives of the wife's family:

R14. Osem nara aunty blo me tufala olo raoa bro blo man ia na come talko dat why hem react and no touchim aunty ia. Time bro blo hem talk noma man ia no react na hem go out na.

R15. Ok fala part where brother hem come talk lo hem hia, lo culture suppose you go overm by you fine more ia, brother or in-law hem come talk and suppose you go ovam by wanfala big fine so for you no fine moa and torowem pig you should stop at the same time, respect oketa totalk blo brother or in-law where hem talk.

T R14. Like another aunt of mine, they were fighting, the brother of the man came and talked and that's why he reacted and didn't touch aunty. When his brother talked, the man didn't react and went out of it.

T R15. Ok, this part where the brother comes and talks to him here, in culture, if you override it you will get a bigger fine, brother in law he comes and talks, and suppose you go over it, a big fine will come, so for you not to get fined more and give pigs, you should stop, at the same time, respect the talk of brothers or in-laws who talk.

Community Men's Focus Group

Figure 5 – Nominated First People to Speak (n = 67)

	Male FG	Female FG	Youth FG	Female Survivors FG	Male Prison FG
1. During argument	Chief	Chief	Chiefs	Mother of husband	Father
	Brother of husband	Parents	Parents of husband	Mother of wife	Mother
	Friend	Mother of wife	Neighbours	Father of husband	Brothers and sisters
	Children		Church	First-born male	
	Parents		Parents of wife		
			Brother of husband		
			Uncle of husband		

2. During violence	Parents	Children	Parents	Brother	Relatives
	Children	Neighbours	Neighbours	Father	Church
	Neighbours	Mother of wife	Children	Chief	Chiefs
	Chiefs	Mother of husband	Wife family	Police	Parents
		Chief	Police		Brothers
		Police	Chief		Mothers
3. After violence/ Aftermath	Parents	Church	Church	Father of husband	Parents
	Chiefs	Chief	Parents	Children	Police
		Women's leader (Church)	Chief	Son	Church
			Police	Mother of wife	
				Chief	
				Police	
				Church	

Also significant are chiefs (18% of nominations) and church (11%). Focus group discussions confirmed chiefs are active in settlement of disputes and compensation. This role in settlement also facilitated their role in earlier stages of disputes by giving warnings to men being violent to stop or face fines or other consequences:

R11. Sometimes chief hemi say "suppose you go beyond more lo any killing more by charge blo you hemi go so much osem more". Lo fine na ia "suppose you touchim more girl ia by you torowe so much pig pig and red money by ontop more for girl ia osem, you stop for doim that one for kilim na girl ia". Hem noma totalk blo mifala chief by hem say osem na ia.

R12. Hem puttim mark for tufala fear for tufala fight again more. Shutem go na.

R13. Chief ia by come and sitdown and deal waitem na tufala husband and wife ia "or what na background and something where utufala fafight from ia makem umi settle down makem everything settle good na" maybe hem na by chief ia by come talem.

T R11. Sometimes the chief will say "suppose you go beyond the level, any more hitting, your charge will be so much more like that". That's the fine "suppose you touch this girl you must give so many pigs and red money on top for this girl, like that, you stop doing it, hitting that girl now". That is just the talk of our chiefs what he will say, like that.

T R12. He puts his mark so those two are afraid to fight again. To stop it.

T R13. Chief comes and sits down and deals with the husband and wife now "oh what is background and something which causes you two to fight, so tha we will settle down, make everything settle good now" maybe that is what chief will come and say.

Community Youth Focus Group

MESSAGES – what kind of messages will be used and understood?

Positive Messages – Anti violence and consequences of violence

Focus groups in Guadalcanal identified a total of 131 messages people said in situations of violence against women and girls that were seen as useful in preventing or stopping violence. These were grouped into similar themes to summarise content, with the following emerging as the most used messages among respondents.

- 1) Solve the problem by talking not fighting. The most common message (29% of all messages) used to stop violence was to settle the problem non-violently, by talking with someone known to the couple such as parent, sibling or neighbour or sometimes chief. These types of people could mediate disputes between the couple. Problems were described as things that could be fixed “stretim” and implicit messages were that violence was not the right way to deal with the problem:

“No doim this one, utufala garem staka pikinini, try stretim utufala, sit down and story”.

T: “Do not do this, you two have many children, try to sort it out amongst yourselves, sit down and talk”.

Community Men’s Focus Group

Bae bro blo hem say “no kilim tabu blo mi”, hem nomoa bae coolem down mind blo hem, then after say sorry and try for stretem tufala ia ae wat kind kilim woman na gogo eye blo hem boila na ia samting ia for stretem nmoa”.

T: His brother will say “do not hit my in-law”, that only will cool down his mind then after say sorry and try to sort the couple out, hey what sort of hitting a woman is that, until her eye is black, it’s just something to sort out.

Female Survivors’ Focus Group

Findim what na root course lo problem by hem save intervene lo solvim na thisfala raoa blo tufala ia. In terms of samfala something osem start for fight osem by quick time by hem no touchim girl ia na ia by hem harem noma baka ia osem hem close lo hem neighbor ia so by hem save harem hem tumas ia so by hem stand for calmim down noma lo situation ia.

Find out what is the root cause of the problem, then can intervene to solve it, this argument of theirs. In terms of some things like this, start to fight like this, he will quickly stop not touch the girl now if he hears this person here that is close to him, neighbour here, so he will hear it very well so he will stand by to calm this situation here.

Community Youth Focus Group

- 2) Do not hit or fight: Linked with message 1, a large number of messages were simply to not hit or violently fight – 26% of all messages.

- 3) Violence causes problems between families (including compensation): In the community visited, most incidents of violence were settled with compensation (such as payments in money or food). The fear or threat of consequences from the wife's family for a husband hurting his wife was a common reason given to stop the violence. 22% of all messages mentioned problems with the wife's family or compensation as a reason to stop violence.

Eye hem boiler finish then anything by osem, oketa tribe blo woman ia by sore lo woman ia too ia so bae chief come oketa sit down together than man ia bae kilim small pig pig sore lo mrs blo hem osem then lo custom na ia, waka blo chief na ia. Lo custom na ia because blood blo woman ia hem out you must kilim pig pig.

T: Her eye is black already then anything like this, all the woman's tribe is sorry for the woman too so the chief will come, they will sit down together then this man will kill a small pig, he is sorry for his mrs, then according to custom here, this is the work of the chief. In custom because blood of a woman has been spilt you must kill a pig.

Community Women's Focus Group

The power of "blood of a woman" was seen as somewhat mitigating victim blaming, even if the woman was considered to have done wrong, once she was injured a case could still made for compensation:

no matter woman ia hem wrong, you have to givim compensation for blood blo woman ia.

Even if the woman here is wrong, you have to give compensation for the blood of the woman [that has been spilt]

Community Men's Focus Group

Both parties could be held responsible for the problem and end up paying compensation. Action by chiefs was not necessarily limited to compensation, but could be in other ways, as the women described:

Sometimes oketa chiefs save disciplinem man to ia. Suppose you hihit olowe oketa save outim you stap three months osem fastime you stap good then you go back.

T: Sometimes the chiefs can discipline men too. If you hit all the time the chiefs can expel you, stay three months like that, if you stay good then you come back.

Community Women's Focus Group

Chief bae givem warning lo tufala. Chief by hem afterem what na problem blo tufala then by hem givem warning lo tufala, enquirem tufala go by kasem what na hem causim problem lo tufala ia. Sometimes bae chief ia hem chargin tufala na ia, what na by hem makem diswan hem finish, so by custom na ia, culture na ia, by red money osem, mifala garem oketa name blo oketa

red money osem ia follom na oketa case osem, so by hem givem go na ia. Then tufala settlem before problem moa.

Chief will give a warning to the couple. He will go after what is the problem of the couple then he will give a warning to them, enquire with them, until he gets to what is the cause of their problem. Sometimes the chief will charge the couple, what will make this finish, so by custom now, culture now, its red money like this, we have names for the red money for particular cases like this, so they will give it. Then they have settled the problem.

Community Women's Focus Group

- 4) Violence is against the law: The warning that violence could result in prison sentences was used in 10% of all messages. While a more common threat was compensation or other forms of discipline by chiefs (15%), some were aware that family violence could result in prison and this was used as a threat, for example:

"You save go prison to ia, you kikilim me olowe by me go report by you go prison too".

"You can go to prison too, if you hit me all the time, I wil go report you and you will go to prison too".

Community Women's Focus Group

Matron by hem tok lo sonny boy blo hem en se "eh sonny boy u no osem bae u go lo prison so best way you come umi solvim samting osem" by hem tok osem lo sonny boy blo hem. Samfa time hem waka ia cos mami garem power to ia.

Mother will talk to her son and say "oh sonny boy do not be like that, you will go to prison, so the best way is if you come and solve this thing" she will talk like that to her son. Sometimes it works because mothers have power too.

Male Prison Inmates' Focus Group

"You stop kilim na wife blo you nogud you go prison for three years or life time lo prison, so you must stop".

"You must stop hitting your wife, or else you will go to prison for three years or a life time in prison, so you must stop"

Community Youth Focus Group

Other common messages included the need to care for and love wives (8%) and the negative consequences of violence for children (6%). Church also had an important role in messages about no violence in a Christian life (8%) and prayer and in final stages sometimes of reconciliations after compensation (when parties might shake hands and pray together).

There were many references to women running back to their parents and family in cases of violence – this could be a temporary (separation to cool down and reconcile) or permanent solution (dissolution of the relationship) to the situation:

Takem noma daughter blo hem ia. Easy one noma you out fastime time umi settlem fastime problem before u come back and utala settle back.

T: Take their daughter. That's an easy way, you get out, settle the problem before you come back and the couple settles back.

Community Youth Focus Group

Shame and regret were commonly cited as negative consequences for men which should be realised and avoided:

Me tok about experience noma ia. Kine man ia time woman hem cry me realizem dat something wrong na me doim. Hand blo me hem go na so time me come sitdown and apologise lo hem lo what me doim wrong lo hem and hem by hem apologise lo me to and mitufala startim new living moa. Hem for correction inside lo family blo mitufala to ia. Hem noma understanding blo me.

I will talk from experience only. This kind of man, when a woman cries I realise that I've done something wrong. My hand has gone [and hit] so when I come and sitdown and apologise to her about what I've done wrong and she, she apologises to me too and we start a new living. It's to correct inside the family of ours too. That's my understanding.

Male Prison Inmates' Focus Group

Sometime tufala by feel shame, man ia by feel shame sitdown quiet and sore lo wife blo hem than hem say "or tingting blo me next time by me no doim because time me doim oketa people come talk lo me me feel shame lo way me doim ia". Man ia by ting osem na ia.

Sometime the couple will feel ashamed, the man will feel ashamed, sit down quiet and be sorry to his wife, then he will say "oh I think next time I will not do it because when I did it, all these people came and talked to me, I feel ashamed about what I did". The man will think like that.

Community Youth Focus Group

Negative Messages – Perceptions of advantages for female survivors + victim blaming

In discussing the Family Protection Act and related materials, some negative perceptions came up that the new system unfairly advantaged women:

R16. That wan ia hem wanfala area where umi luluk save to ia, first time you stopem woman for no go papay and oketa findem you out hem na by oketa finem you \$10,000 ia hem na lo paper ia.

R17. Woman na garem freedom na ia, you have to fine na.

R18. Me lookim hem garem favor lo oketa woman ia, mifala oketa man no garem any say noma.

R16. That one is an area to look at, first when you stop the woman from paying (shopping) and they find you out, they will fine you \$10,000, this paper says.

R17. Woman has freedom, you have to pay the fine.

R18. I see it, it is in favour of the women, us men do not have any say.

Community Men's Focus Group

Umi must save aboutim what na root cause hem, which is why hem better for people like chiefs, church leaders lo communities oketa must save about what na problem. Where hem go hard zmas na and oketa no save explainim anything aboutim na before oketa save transferem come for police, where umi always rush for hem and mekem people suffer nating noma inside lo house. Sometimes dadi hem like fight for right blo hem or sometimes mami hem true hem fight for rights blo hem. Oketa views osem na umi must luk lo hem before umi rurush weitim things.

We must understand what is the root cause of it, which is why it's better for people like chiefs and church leaders in communities, they must know about the problem. If it's very hard and they cannot explain anything about it before they transfer it to police, which we always rush to and make people suffer for nothing inside the house. Sometimes father wants to fight for his rights or sometimes mother its true she fights for her rights. These views like this we have to look at them before rushing things.

Male Prison Inmates' Focus Group

These kind of perceptions – that women have “freedom” or special rights or advantages under the system, detracts attention from the experience of female survivors of violence, many of whom are disadvantaged on several levels. However, it seems to be a common perception amongst men, even those convicted and in prison for violent crimes. Some of these men also held to victim-blaming attitudes and a feeling that their sentences were “unfair”.

FORMAT & DISTRIBUTION – what is the best way to get information to people?

Media use and literacy was higher amongst the participants in the research from Guadalcanal. There was also more parity between men and women in media use – for example use of radio for information was equal between the sexes, and younger women were more likely to read books than men.

Radio was the most used media across all participants to receive information, with mobile phones and social media particularly amongst younger people, being used as an information source.

Music, in particular popular hit tunes, was proposed by prison inmates as a way to spread information about how to practice desired behaviours, e.g. thinking before hitting, and reducing jealousy or excessive drinking.

Despite higher media use amongst participants in Guadalcanal, only a couple of female survivors had heard of the Family Protection Act and related services. Prison inmates had not heard of the Family Protection Act, and it was seen that reformed prisoners could be useful advocates against violence, by demonstrating the consequences of violence through their own experience. However, many prisoners also held to strong victim-blaming attitudes so appropriate advocates would need to be selected.

INFORMATIONAL NEEDS – what are specific requests for information?

Similar to other focus group sites, youth in the focus group wanted to see information materials featuring images of youth, citing common experiences of arguments and violence particularly around jealousy and use of mobile phones and social media (primarily Facebook). A recent case where a youth had seriously injured another after a dispute about a girl's use of mobile phones was cited as evidence of the seriousness of these sorts of disputes if not handled. Male prison inmates also cited jealousy as a cause of arguments and that information could be provided to encourage couples not to be violent over jealousy of relationships with others. Similar, to prison inmates in other sites, information to encourage men to stop and think before being violent was proposed.

Youth and male prison inmates proposed specific campaigns on not drinking, or drinking excessively were needed to tackle violence. Information requested included instructions or suggestions to stop drinking and to reduce peer pressure to drink.

Female survivors of violence primarily wanted information on services – how to access services and what kind of help would be provided. It was seen that such information would be most useful to others in their villages or towns who were currently experiencing violence. Perhaps reflecting the severity of violence they faced, female survivors said the main advice they wanted or thought others needed was “how to run away” from their situation, rather than messages posed by other focus groups on solving problems.

Temotu Focus Group Data

TARGET AUDIENCES – Who will speak to stop violence?

In discussion of developing situations of violence, incidents of violence and the aftermath, there was a lack of consensus on who would be most likely to speak. In the Temotu-situated focus group, people nominated many options – a total of 34 types of people and 80 nominations – more than the other focus groups in Guadalcanal and Malaita. However, out of these options, there was no consensus on who would be most likely to speak. This could mean either a culture of intervention, where anyone and everyone can speak and intervene, or the opposite, a lack of intervention where there are no clearly defined social roles to speak during violent situations and few intervene.

During the five workshops run in Temotu, four people shared stories of grave violence: two stories were about violence resulting in death and two stories were about life threatening situations (a relative of a participant had been hospitalised with critical injuries and one participant in the research had seen a woman cut, doused in kerosene and threatened with being burned alive). All of these incidents had not been reported to Police. Given the many questions on the effectiveness of people speaking during situations, as will be explored below, the focus group data overall suggests few people speak and impact violent situations, during arguments and physical violence (compensation payments negotiated between families generally being used to settle issues after violent incidents).

Most focus groups did agree on one point: children of the couple fighting was seen in all groups as the most likely to speak and have impact on behaviour (see *Figure 6* below). Children comprised 14% of all nominations of first person to intervene, but in 4/5 focus groups this was the primary nomination of types of people to speak. Men, male prison inmates and youth particularly talked about the importance of comments from children in changing men's behaviour.

There was no consensus on who else in the family would speak, with various people being nominated. In cases of compensation, elder males in the husband's family and mothers were nominated as being involved.

Chiefs were 10% of nominations of those who would speak and were primarily nominated as likely to intervene in arguments, not in incidents and aftermath of violence. Some critical comments about chiefs were provided in focus groups:

Mi no chief but me lukim oketa chief oketa stand up time [knocking on door sound] "excuse chief, here \$20 me like you go lo oketa where stealim na pig pig blo me." The chief nowadays ia they need commission before they get up and do their job, before ia noma so that's why hem contribute too, that too much violence long place, domestic violence why hem increase is because oketa chief, oketa weaky lo waka.

T: I am not a chief but I see the chiefs, they get up when [knocking on door sound] "excuse me chief, here is \$20, I want you to go to the people who stole my pig". The chief nowadays needs commission before they get up and do their job, before it was not like this, so that's why it contributes too, too much violence here, domestic violence why it increases is because of the chiefs, they are lazy."

Community Men's Focus Group

Police at 10% of nominations were seen as having the same probability of speaking as chiefs. Church leaders, including the Mothers Union, were nominated as more likely to speak at all stages (16% nominations). Neighbours at 9% of all nominations were also seen as important.

Figure 6 – Nominated First People to Speak (n = 80)

(n= 80)	Male FG	Female FG	Youth FG	Female Survivors FG	Male Prison FG
1. During argument	Chiefs	Neighbour	Children	Grandmother	Children
	Children	NGO worker/volunteer	Mother of husband	Neighbour	Mother of husband
	Neighbour	Chief	Sister of husband	Children	Chief
	Church	Parents	Leaders	Chief	Police
		Relative	Mother of wife		Church leaders
		Children	Police		
		Police			
		Church			
		Mother of husband			
		Brother of husband			
		Elder male			
		Sister of husband			
2. During violence	Chief	Mother of wife	Neighbours	Brother of wife	Police
	Neighbours	Parents of wife	Chief	Neighbours	Relatives of wife
	Children	Neighbour	Bystanders	Parents	Elder male of wife
	Brother or husband	Parents of husband	Children	Brother of man	Father of husband
		Relative of woman		Children	Children
				Police	Church
				Close friend	
3. After violence/ Aftermath	Church	Mother of wife	Father of husband	Mother of husband	Chief
	Relatives of wife	Church	Church	Parents	Church
	Sister of husband	Chief	Employer	Church	Police
	Police	Elder male of husband		Elders	Father of husband
					Children
					Elder male of husband
					Health worker
					NGO worker

MESSAGES – what kind of messages will be used and understood?

Positive Messages – Protecting children and enforcing the law

Focus groups in Temotu identified a total of 124 messages people said in situations of violence against women and girls that were seen as useful in preventing or stopping violence. These were grouped into similar themes to summarise content, with the following emerging as the most used messages among respondents.

- 1) *Hurting women hurts your children and causes children to suffer*: 25% of messages urged men to stop violence by emphasising the consequences of violence for children. Consequences ranged from the extreme (death of the mother) to longer term life chances (disruptions to education, children mimicking violent behaviour as adults). Messages were from children:

R1. Pikinini blo tufala. Sometimes if small boy or small pikinini ia by hem just shashoutim noma "mommy mommy" or "stop na stop na" kine osem hem cry and than suppose hem big boy blo tufala by hem say "utufala stop na no raa".

R2. Sometimes time mommy and daddy raa osem, any elder pikinini long family by hem na hemi talk, hemi say "or what na utufala raa lo hem ia? Utufala mommy and daddy hemi something where for utufala settlem lo house noma ia" stopem oketa "where hemi no fittim mifala pikinini no harem what na argument blo utufala". Bae hem say "or utufala argue osem oketa pikinini moa ia, way blo oketa pikinini na utufala doim ia".

T R1. Their children. Sometimes if a small boy or kid is there they will shout "mommy mommy" or "stop now, stop now" like that and cry and if it's a bigger son of theirs he will say "both of you stop now, do not fight".

T R2. Sometimes the mother and father fight like that, any elder child of the family will talk, will say "what are you fighting about? You parents, it's something for you to settle in the house" stop them "this is not fit for us kids to hear your arguments". Or they will say "you are arguing like children, like children you are behaving".

Male Prison Inmates' Focus Group

Or messages were about stopping violence for the sake of emotional well-being of children:

"Oh you no kilim wife blo you oketa pikinini blo you big finish by you makem pikinini blo you shame and feel nogud". Then bae hem save coolim down mind blo man ia.

T: "Oh do not hurt your wife, your children are grown and will be ashamed of you and feel bad". That will work to cool down the mind of the man.

Female Survivors' Focus Group

“Oh utufala save limitim or story good because oketa pikinini blo you lo hia so try minimisem na story blo utufala nogud umi makem oketa pikinini ia fright”.

T: “You two limit this, or talk sensibly because all your children are here, so try minimise this argument of yours, or else we will make the children frightened.”

Community Men’s Focus Group

Alternatively, messages were about valuing the role of women in caring for children:

Bae mom blo girl ia na run go takem girle blo hem before oketa no kilim. Hem say “you no kilim mom blo pikinini blo you”.

T: The mother of the girl will run and take her daughter before they hit her. She says “do not hurt the mother of your children”.

Community Youth Focus Group

Then if tufala garem pikinini osem by daddy blo boy ia and mommy blo boy by say “you no kilim osem, if you kilim hem die by pikinini blo utufala who na by lukafterem”.

T: Then if the couple has children, the father of the man and mother of the man will say “do not hit her like that, if you kill her, your children who will look after them?”

Female Survivors’ Focus Group

Men in particular were keen to stress that messages from or about children were most likely to motivate them using emotions to stop or change violent behaviour. Youth pointed out this emphasis on children and youth talking in situations of violence added responsibilities to their lives:

lumi dig go back inside lo situation osem because of something osem then iumi save putim lo way where hem right osem “oh something osem noma osem you wrong lo hem ia” like you save help or like torowem samfala words where by hem helpem oketa for realisem oketa small small mistakes where sparkim up oketa big arguments. Me lukim oketa pikinini oketa doim big responsibility for stretim up oketa arguments

T: We dig into the situation like this because of something like this then we know how to put things right like “oh this thing here you did wrong” like you can help or throw out some words which will help them [the parents] to realise all their small, small mistakes which spark all the big arguments. I see all the children; they take a big responsibility to sort out all the arguments.

Community Youth Focus Group

- 2) *Violence is against the law*: 23% of messages mentioned either the fact that violence is against the law, that prison was a possible outcome, or threatened to report violence to the Police (9% of all messages threatened to report the violent man to Police). This reflects higher awareness of the Family Protection Act in the Temotu-

based focus groups than in other focus groups in this study and indicates intent of communities to use the law. For example:

R6. Samfala people na talem come for savim tufala na because woman ia garem karakill na because u save oketa man Rambo ia. Sometimes family lo there hem must come na sidem daughter blo hem "eh you no kilim daughter blo me tumas na, by mifala reportim you". Uncle blo woman ia osem, bro blo hem because dad blo hem oloman forgud na.

R7. Dadi blo man ia by hem go for arrange for police for come and takem son blo hem. Hem say "oh you wrong tumas na ia lo law and culture or custom blo umi for you hittim woman, oketa woman oketa no strong so lo side lo custom hem nogud for you hittim woman and lo law hem osem too..."

R8. Sometimes na oketa makem lo custom or because custom hem big lo oketa so oketa makem lo custom makem oketa no makem lo law, so oketa lukim lo custom hem have to waka na.

R9. Chief by come talem "naf nao because suppose you kilim nogud by oketa reportim u ia lo police" than by hem osem surrender lelebet putim talk osem noma.

T R6. Some people say it to save the couple because the woman has injuries now, because you know men are Rambo now. Sometime family there must come and side with their daughter "hey do not hurt our daughter too much we will report you". The uncle of the woman is like that, her brother, because her dad is too old.

T R7. Father of the man will arrange for police to come and take his son. He'll say "oh you are very wrong in the eyes of the law and culture and our custom, it's not good for you to hit a woman and the law says the same too..."

T R8. Sometimes they use custom, make them not use the law, so they see that custom must work now.

T R9. Chief will come and say "enough now, because if you hit her badly they will report you to the police" then he [the offender] will surrender a bit, put the talk like that.

Male Prison Inmates' Focus Group

Warning about prison sentences was a common strategy to try and get men to stop violence:

"Bro you no osem nogud bae u end up lo sella, no kilim wife blo you". Hem end up lo prison than by hem realisim than by hem stop for doim kine ia lo family and wife.

T: "Brother don't be bad like that, you will end up in a [prison] cell, do not hit your wife". He ends up in prison then realizes then he will stop doing that

kind of thing to his family and wife.

Community Male Focus Group

These kind of messages, emphasizing consequences of prison sentences, were suggested by men as useful for posters targeting potential male offenders.

- 3) *Husbands should not hurt their wives*: This is a broad category for several messages – the most common being that bride price was not done so a man could hit his wife, men should “luk afterim wife” and “loven hem” and that women were physically weaker than men so therefore needed protection. 22% of messages emphasised duties/roles of husbands to wives in this way. Primarily people said that violence was not right, using drawing on custom, but also on church teachings and law as appropriate, for example:

Dad blo boy ia talem too dat “wife blo you na you kilim girl ia” because lo hia oketa buym girl ia and “me na paym wife blo you for come stap lo house so you no kilim girl ia”.

T: The father of the boy here says too “this is your wife you hit, this girl here” because here people buy a girl and “I paid for your wife to come stay in this house, so do not hit her.”

Community Women’s Focus Group

“You no kilim woman ia because mifala na paym” so thatfala statement hem save makem man ia for garem guilty conscience wea bae hem helpem na for no kilim na woman ia, hem na lo custom so daddy blo baka ia na save putim statement ia.

T: “You do not hit this woman because we have paid for her” so that statement will make the man to have a guilty conscience where he will help now to not hit the woman, that is custom, so father of this man can make this statement.

Male Prison Inmates’ Focus Group

“Marriage hem something that God hem givem and hem no talem that umi usim wife blo intala as a punching bag that bae you controllim wife osem, noma, God hem creatim woman, hem creatim man hem purpose blong God for woman and man for marit.

Marriage is something that is God-given and God did not say we should use a wife as a punching bag, that you will control your wife like that, no, God created woman, he created man, and the purpose of God for woman and man is that they should be married

Community Men’s Focus Group

- 4) *Solve the problem by talking not fighting*: 18% of messages emphasised the need to “stretim”, “fixim” “discuss” or otherwise solve the problem, rather than continuing violence. Strategies used in these kinds of approaches to the couple mirrored those in other provinces, such as asking what the problem was, stating that the problem could be solved and inviting the couple to discuss with others the problem.

Other common messages pointed to other consequences of violence – mainly compensation (which could be paid to the wife’s family) or the fact that violence would cause “shame” and/or was not something “fo publicim” (to share in public). Each of these themes came up 9% of all messages. The likelihood the woman would go back to her family and leave the man (6% of all messages) was another negative consequence mentioned.

Prison and family hardship because of violence was a theme of messages from the Male Prison Inmates’ Focus Group:

“Problem blo utufala ia hem need for utufala settlem or umi settlem, good na you settlem if mifala come inside lo law or lo side blo law, consequences blong disfala law or act ia hemi big tumas where you save losim family, hem good ufala reconcile because bae hemi, I mean hem good for utufal reconcile because consequences blo hem hem big tumas, bae you save stap lo prison and than by you no save accesim oketa pikinini blo you more in many way,s lo side blo education and other requirements blo family affairs”

T: Your problem needs for you to settle it, or us to settle it, its good if you settle it, if we come inside the law or on the side of the law, the consequences of this law or act is very big, you can lose your family, it’s good for you to reconcile because it’s, I mean. it’s good for you to reconcile because the consequences of it are very big, you will stay in prison and then you cannot see your children in many ways, like the side of education and other requirements of family affairs.”

Negative Messages – Victim Blaming

Women seen as not “listening” to their husbands were perceived as likely to attract violence, and this violence was condoned:

Sometimes woman na startim, bae me putim topic ia lo woman, sister blo hem hem arrive come and say “good na ia tabu for hem lane lo hem, good na you doim that one me agree along waitem you, hem no save listen lo you” sister blo woman ia seleva na ia by arrive na ia.

T: Sometimes the woman starts it, I will put this as a topic for women, her sister will arrive and say “good [you do it] in-law, make her learn from this, good you do that, I agree with you, she does not listen to you” sister of the woman on her own will arrive and say.

Community Men’s Focus Group

Husband maybe by hem say “sore na but hem na you feelim na, you na sometimes you like for win olowe noma”

T: Husband will say [as beating wife] “sorry but do you feel it now, you sometimes, you always must win”

Community Men’s Focus Group

The idea that women should not “tok big” as it could lead to violence was so common it was even repeated by children:

Pikinini blo hem hem 10yrs osem or 11 hem save talk lo mommy blo hem and say "mommy next time time daddy hem cross lo you, next time bae you no big voice tumas bae you come down na because if you talk hard tumas moa lo daddy by hem kilim you".

T: Their children, 10 years old or 11, they can talk to their mother and say "Mummy, next time daddy is cross at you, next time do not raise your voice too much, come down now, because if you talk crossly too much more daddy will hit you."

Community Women's Focus Group

While a common message was bride price did not equal rights to beat or abuse women, the opposite view was also mentioned several times:

Tufala raa and husband blo hem beatim wife blo hem, than mother inlaw blo hem hem run go talk go lo son blo hem for no kilim na disfala woman ia, but than son blo hem ia no harem too mom blo hem ia because hem like for woman blo hem must save how na life style blo community ia because woman ia just come in and no save how na lifestyle blo oketa. Husband blo hem like for hem listen lo hem because hem na paym disfala woman ia, so time mom blo hem talk hem never listen lo mom blo hem.

T: The couple fights and her husband beats his wife, then her mother in law rushes to go talk to her son to not hit this woman, but then her son does not listen much to his mother, because he wants his woman to understand lifestyle in the community, because the woman is new and doesn't know the lifestyle of the people. Her husband wants for her to listen to him because he paid for this woman, so when his mother talks he never listens to her.

Community Women's Focus Group

Sometimes oketa people lo village na save talem "you leavim man ia na, by hem kkillim you go go you die bae you how?" sometimes oketa just engagim you noma than oketa kilim you an so bae oketa save say "man ia no paym you yet than hem kilim you how much more time hem paym you? You leavim hem na".

T: Sometimes the people of the village tell them "you leave this man, if he keeps hurting you and then eventually you die, how will you be?" Sometimes they just got you engaged then start hitting you and so they will say "he hasn't even paid for you yet, then he hits you, how much worse will it be after he pays for you? You leave him now".

Female Survivors' Focus Group

These negative messages divert attention away from men taking responsibility for violence and were found in 10% of all messages nominated in the focus groups.

FORMAT & DISTRIBUTION – what is the best way to get information to people?

Visual information preferred

Women expressed a strong preference for visual information or aural information (radio and face to face talks). It was observed that female survivors had low literacy levels. NGO and

government workers also expressed a strong preference for videos and posters to use in face to face talks and in public places in communities.

Men and male prison inmates thought that information about penalties and consequences for men or children or both (e.g. a perpetrator in prison separated from his children) presented in a dramatic form would be most influential in male behaviour change. Posters or films would naturally be good formats to represent these consequences.

Church primary network across Province

Radio was the media most used to receive information in Temotu, particularly by men. Female use of media in Temotu was markedly lower than male use, very few women reported using the media for information (including mobile phones).

Oxfam and the government have previously engaged the Mothers Union (Anglican Church) to spread information about violence against women, and it is likely that the engagement of church groups is the most effective way of spreading information across the province, especially to women. The Anglican Church enjoys predominance in most parts of Temotu, and the Mothers Union was cited as a likely intervenor and trusted source of information in both the Community Women's Focus Group and the Female Survivors' Focus Group.

Men and youth predominantly preferred Police as a source of information, and increasing capacity of police to do awareness was also seen as desirable.

INFORMATIONAL NEEDS – what are specific requests for information?

There are requests for information from Police about violence against women and girls, including credible warnings of the consequences of this violence under the law. Three out of the five focus groups said they would prefer information from Police than other groups on the issue of violence against women and girls (particularly youth, men and male prison inmates).

This emphasis on Police related to recent experiences of violence and perceptions that local actors were either were not active or not effective in dealing with arguments and violent incidents:

Lo home blo me osem me save Temotu hem wanfala province where violence hem so high and me garem experience where me lukim oketa woman suffer and me try for tingim what na by happen, even oketa church leaders no save savem oketa, oketa chiefs oketa settlem problem fine go go stretim settlem bae start back more.

T: My home is like, I know Temotu is one province where violence is very high and I have experience where I have seen the women suffer and I try to think what could happen, even the church leaders cannot save them, the chiefs settle the problem with fines but after settlement, the violence starts back again.

Community Women's Focus Group

R8. But question osem: oketa chiefs lo there oketa issues osem ia oketa look follom but oketa givem mercy olowe, staka cases pile up ia but oketa no save reportim. Oketa mercy lo oketa man ia.

R9. Osem lo home oketa putim rate so if you commitim that wan you save how much na if chief oketa sendim come lo you, you save how much na for givem. But I think so far no any cases where oketa serious tumas oketa reportim lo police.

T R8. But a question: the chiefs are there, the issues like this they see them but they give mercy all the time [to the man], many cases pile up but they never report them. They give mercy to the man.

T R9. Like at home they set a rate so if you commit that you know how much to pay, if chiefs are sent to come to you, you know how much to give. But I think so far there are no cases which are very serious that they report to police.

Community Women's Focus Group

Reliance on Police for information and emphasis on Police is linked back to lack of trust in local leadership. In the Community Male Focus Group, chiefs were criticised for taking money for work, rather than acting fairly to all in the community while in the Community Women's Focus Group chiefs were described as "giving mercy" to the offenders repeatedly. Therefore, warnings from outside the community were preferred:

Me just like for talem noma that lo hia time oketa people ia talk no anyone save listen noma ia. Noma now as far as mifa save I think police noma right man save talem hem law and order ia. I mean for talem hem that law this time hem osem ia if you doim osem by oketa osem lo penalty. I think that one by hem garem weight and hem cut down lelebet because bae hem frightem na law ia. How me save lo disfala village na ia, for fearem oketa ia hem no waka na. Oketa chiefs and elders doim but kine osem by oketa treatim osem hem total talk noma ia by no any action osem oketa doim. View blo me noma na ia.

T: I just want to say that here when people talk, no one will listen. Not at all now as far as we know, I think police is the only right one to talk about law and order here. I mean to tell them that law this time is like this, if you do this the penalty will be like this. I think that one has weight and cuts down it a bit, because people will be frightened of the law. How I see this village, they do not fear anyone, it will not work. The chiefs and elders do it but people see it as only talk, no action, like they do. This is my view now.

Community Women's Focus Group

Conversely, the Female Survivors' Focus Group and the Community Men's Focus Group reported they had contacted the Police for help and were turned away (several focus group participants had been told to go and sort it out locally, one participant had been told the office had no paper, one participant had made a statement to Police which was taken but there was no follow up action over one year after the alleged offence). So, the credibility of Police and whether it was conceivable they would implement the law was questioned by these participants. This negative public sentiment towards Police as well as specific experience of inaction of Police was also mentioned as a concern by NGO workers. There is

a need to build trust in communities through information about Police supporting action on violence against women.

As in other locations, male prison inmates expressed a need for information to encourage men to stop and think before reacting with violence to situations. The consequences of violence for men should be emphasized in IEC materials aimed at men in general in the community. Male prison inmates said information about penalties under the Family Protection Act was helpful as a deterrent and this information should be spread throughout Temotu for that reason.

Youth participants in the research highlighted that available materials on violence against women were focused on adults who were married, rather than situations applicable to youth such as dating, harassment by older people for sex, jealousy over contact between people from opposite sexes on Facebook and mobile phones.

All focus groups, and the informal discussion with NGO workers, supported the idea of communication explaining that customs of bride price did not legitimate violence by husbands against their wives. Local NGO workers and journalists pointed out that in some communities the custom of bride price has become commercialised and lost its original intent.

Almost all focus groups emphasized the need for information to move out beyond Lata and Santa Cruz island. As per other provinces, IEC materials and programs has suffered from “urban bias” with no information about Family Protection Act reaching most the province.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

This research provides several implications for those organisations concerned with how to prepare and deliver effective information, education and communication on violence in the family. The following summary groups major findings and implications into information relevant to national communications.

The researchers found that communities themselves, given the right approach and research process, are the ones who are best able to identify messages that work to reduce violence. In focus groups, there was a tangible desire for practical information communities and families can use to prevent violence, report violence and for women to access services when needed. However, the knowledge of communities, female survivors and male perpetrators (in this case male prison inmates convicted of violent crime) is dramatically under-utilised. This is the first study the researchers could find that asked people what would help their situation and used that information to devise potential messages and strategies for communication. There needs to be greater connection between agencies devising projects and materials about violence, and those communities that are experiencing and will be recipients of these projects and materials. This connection needs to also acknowledge Solomon Islands' diversity in culture and other differences such as situational and geographic realities and differential situations of youth, women and men.

FINDING 1) LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: Communities and people experiencing violence have valuable contributions to communications about the topic. The 200 research participants in the focus groups came up with 324 messages that they perceived could prevent, stop or reduce violence. There was a strong focus in focus group discussions on problem solving and local context and many tangible ideas generated. Local knowledge can be tapped to provide effective messages and identify who is best places to stimulate social change. Testing of communication materials before they are finalised is suggested to increase use of local knowledge in IEC.

FINDING 2) RESEARCH LIMITATIONS: *The scope of this study is limited and more research is needed.* It is acknowledged that of the nine provinces only three were involved in this research, and even within these provinces the geographical reach of the research is small. Male Prison Inmates' Focus Groups and Female Survivors' Focus Groups, each of which represented people from different parts of the province, pointed to the diversity within provinces about what people do in situations of violence and what communications will be effective. Focus groups in other provinces, using the same or similar techniques, would be desirable to build up more nationally representative data and inform local and provincial level efforts to reduce violence. Also, tracking the experience of survivors and perpetrators through the system to see what role information plays in change would be useful.

FINDING 3) INTERVENORS ARE MOST LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE CHANGE, BUT INTERVENORS ARE NOT THE SAME: *Who will communicate to stop violence is culturally specific.* In Malaita, fathers of husbands are the primary actors, in Guadalcanal parents of the couple are intervenors and in Temotu children are the first to act. Intervenors outside the family vary, with Malaita and Guadalcanal sites visited placing importance on chiefs to act in a variety of ways (including teachings, warnings, compensation and dispute settlement). In Temotu sites, there was more pressure on Police to intervene in the absence of intervention

by local actors, but also some dissatisfaction with the Police response from those that had used the Police to intervene. Police were seen across most sites by men to be useful conduits of messages of warnings and deterrents towards men likely to engage in violence. The church across most sites were seen as useful conduits of information by women. This information is important for service providers and advocates to be aware of so they can work with intervenors and not put women at further risk by failing to provide a supportive environment for them to seek help.

FINDING 4) SIMILAR MESSAGES OF CHANGE: *There are three messages across all sites that were seen as effective in reducing violence.*

A) *Solve the problem by talking not fighting.* This was a primary message in Malaita (28%) and Guadalcanal (29%). Although 18% in Temotu, the high levels of violence in Temotu could benefit from more attention around solving family problems non-violently. Common phrases used that could be crafted into messages are: "stretim", "solvim problem", "wat nao iufala rowa lo hem?", "sumting fo stretim, no fo killim", "tok, no hitim fo solvim problem", "cool down en stretim". People close to the couple can help them solve problems without resort to violence by using these messages.

B) *Violence is against the law.* This was a particularly important message in Temotu sites visited - given the lack of intervention by local actors, the idea that law would stop violence was critical for change. In Guadalcanal, this message was already being used by women (as a threat to husbands) and by male leaders, both church and chiefs, as a warning to make men stop violence. In Malaita, cultural norms about the legitimate use of violence, means that the message proposed by one women leader "do not take the law into your own hands" was seen as needed to encourage people to use the law, rather than violence to settle disputes between individuals and families. When the researchers presented basic information on the Family Protection Act to participants, one of the most common questions was whether penalties for violence would be reduced if there was a "reason" for the violence. So, the basic idea that there is no excuse for violence under the law can have a powerful impact on social norms over time. Although rationale for this message differs across locations, it is almost universally seen as useful in changing male behaviour.¹⁴

C) *Violence creates more problems than it solves.* In each site, participants drafted messages emphasising negative consequences of violence. In Guadalcanal, it was emphasised a man hitting his wife would mean problems between the two families (including disputes and compensation). In Temotu, there was a gravity attached to the consequences of violence for the children of the couple. In Malaita, there was a sense of "shame" from violent incidents and a feeling the action of the couple was linked to the man's family's status and reputation. Another commonly cited problem across all sites was that of imprisonment and subsequent separation of fathers from families. These consequences were frequently phrased as warnings. Thematically, this message links well with Message A above – messages such as "solvim problem bifo hem go big moa... [add in consequences considered most serious in the location].

FINDING 5) COMMON INFORMATION GAPS. *Topics communities request information about most are services, the law and behavioural change tips:*

Services – what is available and how to access them. Female participants in focus groups across sites were most interested in practical information about what to do in

situations of violence. Information about services was prioritised over information about the Family Protection Act and about the general problem of violence by women. While some survivors accessing services and a few youth in Guadalcanal had heard about the 132 referral service for people experiencing violence, the vast majority of people (90%) in this study had not heard of the referral service. Men in Temotu also expressed interest in using the 132 service in particular.

Female violence survivors had two particular suggestions for IEC about services – 1) they should give advice about what to do in practical terms (e.g. how to “run away” or what decisions services would allow them to make and what their options were if they went to a service) and 2) they should present services as friendly, non-judgemental and safe for women. One female survivors focus groups suggested specific images such as smiling service staff, people hugging women, explaining one of the greatest fears was whether they would be judged or viewed negatively by staff running the service.

Penalties under the Family Protection Act. Spreading information about penalties under the Family Protection Act, including consequences of prison sentences was seen to have a useful role in deterring men from violence. Men in all focus groups in the community and male prison inmates particularly thought information on penalties and the law should be spread widely to reduce violence. However, in Temotu and Guadalcanal, women too nominated the use of threatening imprisonment and court as useful in changing men’s thinking and behaviour around violence against their wives.

Anger management and alcohol abuse. Men and male prison inmates had useful suggestions on strategies for men to manage anger “cool down” and not act in anger and enact violence that would later be regretted. This information could help promote male behaviour change in communities. Also, several focus groups, particularly youth, men and male prison inmates said campaigns and information to reduce alcohol consumption was needed in order to reduce violence.

FINDING 6) VISUAL INFORMATION SHORTAGE: *There is a need for more visual information about violence.* Particularly among rural women, there is a likelihood that many will not be able to read and understand written communication. It was observed that many female survivors of violence accessing services had low literacy levels, and data from Family Support Centre (see *BOX 1*) confirms most women hear about services through word of mouth. Posters and other materials that can present information in pictures are needed to get the message across. Films, particularly those that can help explain what services do for women and what are the negative consequences of violence for men would be useful additions to currently available materials. Drama and film can be used to dramatically express some more complex ideas – e.g. the impact of violence on children or how to encourage a man to stop violence.

FINDING 7) RADIO CAN HELP INCREASE KNOWLEDGE OF INFLUENCERS: *Radio is useful as a source of information for local leaders.* While use of radio was low, local leaders are more likely than others in the community to own and listen to the radio. In Guadalcanal, there was a higher use of radio than the other provinces, perhaps reflecting better access and choice of services. So, engagements targeted at chiefs, for example, could usefully employ radio, while communications targeted at the general populace or women would more effectively use social networks.

FINDING 8) SOCIAL NETWORKS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN TRADITIONAL MEDIA *Social networks remain the best distribution channel for information.* As with intervenors, social networks are culturally diverse, networks which are prominent in one province (e.g. a particular church denomination) may be less influential in another province. Nevertheless, social networks through churches or locally based services (schools and clinics) are most used for information, compared to mainstream media.

FINDING 9) WORK WITH CHIEFS: *In many locations chiefs are arbiters of whether violence is considered "cultural" and outcomes for women in conflict resolution.* In Malaita primarily, but also Guadalcanal, networks of chiefs can promote cultures of intervention and prevention of violence. They do this in two ways 1) chiefs are keen to point out that violence against women and traditional culture in both locales are not associated, in fact in many traditional societies it was "tambu" (forbidden) to hit women, and 2) chiefs are called in to mediate "serious" disputes including serious cases of violence against women. Councils of chiefs provide useful forums for chiefs to discuss messages, using culture, to discourage violence against women. In some locales where chiefs are not seen as "active", as in some sites in Temotu, chiefs no longer have the same power to speak against violence. Chiefs have rarely been engaged by agencies working on violence against women.

FINDING 10) CHURCHES HAVE EDUCATIONAL ROLE: *Churches typically promote information about marriage, healthy relationships and potentially could spread information about services.* In none of the focus groups was the church seen as a forceful intervenor in violent disputes, but they were seen to have two important roles 1) an educational role, to teach people what is marriage, roles of men and women and healthy relationships and 2) to spread information, particularly amongst women's church networks. However, to date churches have rarely been used to spread about the information most desired by women – information about services. There seems to be potential for collaboration, particularly with churches running refuges in several provinces and so being service providers themselves.

FINDING 11) YOUTH INFORMATION NEEDS ARE DIFFERENT: *Information that targets married couples are not appropriate for youth.* Youth need information specifically targeted at them and their situations – for example youth across all sites when looking at information on violence said it would be perceived as less relevant to them because of visual and informational focus on married couples. Sources of disputes amongst young couples prior to marriage are also different and commonly about jealousy, gender roles, contact with others through phones and social media and alcohol abuse. Youth requested more information on "dealing with jealousy" or healthy relationships and alcohol abuse and for other relevant information (services and the law) to be described in situations they could relate to.

FINDING 12) INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION NEEDED: *Together agencies stand to increase knowledge and social change, or divided they fail.* In informal discussions with national and provincial government, international NGOs, women's refuges and services and church run support services, there was often frustration between the lack of coordination and cooperation amongst organisations. The researchers also found it was difficult to ascertain which organisation had done awareness or communications where and to what effect. Meanwhile, the reach of all these organisations suffers from "urban bias", largely focused on easy to get to places around capital centres, and need for information outstrips

supply. Even within half an hour's travel from capital centres, the researchers found communities who had never heard of the Family Protection Act, 132 service referral number or other basic information about violence against women. A visual tool, like a map of activities, showing where all agencies have run activities or distributed information, so coordinating staff in government can easily "see" what has happened where, would help target new efforts to areas that have no information or greatest information needs.

FINDING 13) DON'T PREACH, HELP: *More promotion of help-seeking behaviour is needed in communication efforts.* While many agencies are working on prevention of violence through awareness (see Appendix A) there is a lack of information on how men and women in violent relationships can seek help. For instance, many IEC materials do not mention the 132 referral service number or other contact for people who need support from outside the community. It may be that this lack of promotion is related to the scarcity of services, or it may be that the conceptualisation of projects on "prevention" considers use of services an "intervention" or something for a later stage. However, information about services has a preventative function (by making people aware of outside supports as an option) and use of services at early stages of family problems or violence, may prevent more serious injuries and lethal violence. Simple measures, such as including 5 words about the 132 referral service or an appropriate number to call the Police, in all information materials (whether prevention materials or not) could help stop violence.

Appendix A – Communications Materials Overview

ORGANISATION	IEC TITLE	KEY MESSAGE/S	CONTENT	FPA DESCRIPTION	SERVICE INFORMATION	CONTACT POINTS
RSIPF	Family Violence in the Solomon Islands	Family violence is NOT Solomon Islands custom Family violence is a CRIME	What is DV Phases Why victims stay Who can help	None	None	Police FSC CCC NRH Church
MWYCFA	Protecting our Families through the law: The Family Protection Act 2014	Aims of FPA	What is DV Police Safety Notice Interim Protection Order + Final Order Fines and Penalties FAQ	Detailed	None	MWYCFA
CEDAW Committee & SAFENET	Family Protection Act Factsheet	Not clear	Protection order What FPA does What in FPA What is DV	Detailed	132	132
Family Support Centre	Legal Literacy – Protection and Restraining Orders	Not clear	What is Police Safety Notice Making him leave home Can I get help Who can get a PO & how Other protection Separation Why go Court What happens if couple reconciles or splits Restraining Orders	Detailed	FSC Public Solicitors Office 132	FSC Public Solicitors Office 132

World Vision	Poster series Various messages	Prevention – speak out to protect vulnerable Male & female equal in eyes of God Stop violence – love respect care Violence makes families unsafe Address cultural issues	Pictures	No mention of FPA	No mention of services	No mention of contact
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¹ In 2017, there was one female Member of Parliament who was also the Minister for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and five female Members of Provincial Assemblies (two from Isabel Province and one each in Malaita, Western Province and Temotu).

² Flood, M. & B. Pease (2009). Factors Influencing Attitudes to Violence Against Women. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 10/2 pp: 126.

³ See Nayak, M. B., Byrne, C. A., Martin, M. K., & Abraham, A. G. (2003). Attitudes toward violence against women: A cross-nation study. *Sex Roles*, 49 pp: 333-342.

⁴ Flood, M. (2011) Building Men's Commitment to Ending Sexual Violence Against Women. *Feminism & Psychology* 21/2 pp: 263.

⁵ Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs. (2017). *National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016-2020 Solomon Islands*. Honiara: Solomon Islands Government. pp: 10.

⁶ See Markowitz 2001

⁷ Secretariat of the Pacific Community. (2009). *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: a study on violence against women and children*. Noumea: SPC.

⁸ See Johnson, Michael P., and Janel M. Leone (2005), "The Differential Effects of Intimate Terrorism and Situational Couple Violence," *Journal of Family Issues*, 26/3, 322–349.

Johnson and Leone describe two types of VAWG perpetrators – Intimate Terrorists which use violence to control and are typically hard to change, and Situational Couple Abusers which are more open to change and can be treated.

⁹ Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2009). pp. 8.

¹⁰ Secretariat of the Pacific Community. (2009). pp. 124

¹¹ Various research projects conducted by Dr Anouk Ride from 2010 and 2017 always revealed cases of women who reported violence to Police being referred to their community, or women reported that Police did not attend incidents citing lack of transport and other reasons. Further research is required to indicate the level of responsiveness of RSIPF to women's reports of violence.

¹² Most men sought assistance over matters involving children such as custody, reunification and other family matters, mostly referred to FSC from the Police or Public Solicitors Office.

¹³ This form of violence can be physical, sexual or psychological, but usually in Solomon Islands conversation "vaelens" refers to physical and sexual acts.

¹⁴ The only exception to this is the participants that have negative experiences with Police (being turned away when reporting problems, or perceived bias or inaction by officers). These people and their social networks most likely need added information on police acting on family violence cases and other efforts to restore trust in the ability and willingness of police to respond to incidents.